

treatment and recovery

Treatment and Recovery: Finding Specialized Help for Substance Use Disorders

Most Americans face varying levels of stress throughout their lives—at work, in their families, and in their communities. Stress can be a contributing factor to the use of alcohol and/or drugs and also may cause some people to relapse or return to substance use after periods of abstinence.¹ An estimated **23.1 million needed treatment for substance dependence or abuse in 2008 in the United States.**²

Generally, people understand the need to manage stress in daily life: 76 percent of people polled in a national survey said they participated in more constructive activities than they did 6 months before. This includes spending time with family and friends, attending religious services, exercising, watching television, reading, or listening to music.³ For some individuals, a more structured approach to handling stress, especially when substance use disorders are present, is required.

Of those who needed treatment for a substance use disorder in 2008, approximately 20.8 million did not receive it.⁴ Although these numbers are staggering, recovery is possible through a variety of treatment and recovery resources. For this reason, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT), within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, sponsors **National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Recovery Month (Recovery Month)** each September. The celebration encourages all people to seek treatment for substance use disorders, celebrates individuals and families in long-term recovery, and acknowledges those working in the field who provide recovery services. This year's theme, **"Join the Voices for Recovery: Now More Than Ever!"**, is designed to reach people who in times of stress are susceptible to alcohol and/or drug use and relapse. This document provides an overview of treatment and recovery options and outlines how people can use these resources during times of stress to achieve relief from substance use disorders.

Overview of Treatment and Recovery Options

To understand addiction, it is important to understand the complexity of the disease and its influence on the brain. Addiction is a chronic illness, like diabetes or asthma. Living a life free from alcohol and drugs is not just a matter of willpower — it often requires help. As with other chronic diseases, treatment is effective; studies indicate that over the past 25 years, treatment and recovery services have worked to reduce drug use, and new treatments have emerged.⁵ SAMHSA is supporting **10 Strategic Initiatives**, including the use of data to help develop policy and improve outcomes for treatment and recovery services.

targeted outreach

People can choose from many treatment options, depending on what works best for them. Options include inpatient and outpatient programs, medication-assisted therapies, mutual and peer-support groups, faith-based support, and Internet resources. Choices help individuals with stress, because they can choose a customized recovery method that addresses their everyday needs and fits into their busy schedules.⁶ For example, medications help suppress drug cravings and are often used in conjunction with counseling and other outpatient behavioral therapies.^{7,8} Other treatment options include:

Intervention, Treatment, or Recovery Support Options	Description
Hospital-based rehabilitation units	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Located in a unit at a general hospital, these programs are best suited for people who have developed chronic or acute medical or psychiatric problems along with their addiction.⁹▪ In 2008, 16.8 percent of people who received treatment for substance use participated in a hospital-based rehabilitation unit program.¹⁰
Short-term residential treatment centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ These are stand-alone facilities that specialize in the treatment of alcohol and drug addiction and dual diagnosis of multiple issues. People generally reside within the facility 24 hours a day under the care of a team of addiction professionals.¹¹▪ The average length of stay at these facilities is 20 days.¹²
Long-term residential treatment centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Similar to free-standing centers but with longer stays, these centers offer highly structured programs that offer care 24 hours a day, with an average stay of 6 to 12 months. They help people return to a substance-free lifestyle. They sometimes are transitional facilities used before a person re-integrates into society.^{13, 14}▪ In 2008, 18.6 percent of people who received treatment for substance use were in a long-term residential treatment center.¹⁵

now more than ever!

Intervention, Treatment, or Recovery Support Options	Description
Outpatient treatment programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These are a range of programs that typically emphasize individual or group counseling and family therapy. They are convenient for individuals who are employed, have extensive social support systems, and live at home or another structured setting. They are designed for people who can visit a clinic at least three to five days a week.¹⁶ In 2008, 1.5 million people received treatment through an outpatient program.¹⁷
Self-help, mutual support groups, and peer-to-peer recovery services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These are recovery support programs, such as SMART Recovery®, Nar-Anon, Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, and the Association of Persons Affected by Addictions (APAA). These services include 12-step programs, other regular support meetings, self-help groups, and peer counseling.^{18, 19} One-third of people who attended a self-help group for their substance use in 2008 received additional specialty treatment services during that time.²⁰ However, many achieve successful recovery through self-help alone.
Online support groups and meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These groups provide individuals the opportunity to receive support and attend meetings from anywhere. This is an example of a stress-free approach to recovery – people can attend these meetings when their schedule permits and do not have to worry about the cost, transportation, or childcare. The Recovery Group, In The Rooms, and The Second Road, Inc. are resources that offer online meetings. Additionally, Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous offer online meeting support options.

now more than ever!

Intervention, Treatment, or Recovery Support Options	Description
E-therapy services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These services use electronic media and information technologies to provide treatment services for participants in different locations. E-therapy can be administered through text-based communication methods (e.g., email, Internet chats, text messaging) or non-text-based communication methods (e.g., telephone, videoconferencing). According to a survey, 90 percent of people who participated in these online services felt that e-therapy helped them.²¹
Recovery chat rooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online venues also offer less structured ways for people to share their stories with fellow members of the recovery community. Conversations in chat rooms, such as Recovery Chat, include people in every stage of recovery. Most chat rooms have moderators, and some focus on specific topics, including morning meditation and dual recovery from substance use and other disorders.²²
Faith-based support groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who attend spiritually based recovery support programs, such as Catholic Charities, the General Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church, and the Shinnyo-en Foundation, have the added support that is needed for any type of chosen treatment. Faith-based support is also available at many churches, synagogues, or other religious worship sites. In 2008, 2.2 million people received treatment at a self-help group, which includes faith-based support groups.²³
Recovery support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These supplemental programs help individuals and their families address other needs. They include employee-based support services and health care support.^{24, 25} The Employee Assistance Program Directory, for example, provides more than 550 programs that can be searched by State or nationally and can locate substance abuse professionals.

now more than ever!

Treatment and recovery require commitment and courage by the person with a substance use disorder, as well as his or her family, friends, and loved ones. Misconceptions that surround addiction cause stress for many people, including the fear of disappointing loved ones. However, fewer than 20 percent of people in the United States actually would think less of a loved one who is in recovery from addiction.²⁶ The recovery process happens over a period of time. It requires a range of services and support to address the unique needs of each person and his or her loved ones.



Nancy Schneck
Las Vegas, NV

Who am I today? I've been in the publishing field for more than 21 years. I am executive editor of a small independent publisher that publishes books on addiction treatment, recovery, and behavioral health care topics. I could not be doing what I'm doing today without being in recovery.

I've come a long way from where I was. After a series of tragic losses during my teenage years, I sought the empty darkness alcohol and other drugs provided. My drugs were all that I had left after 15 years of blackouts.

When I woke up in restraints after my third and last overdose, I knew I could no longer continue using. I have not used alcohol or other drugs since November 30, 1982. I completed inpatient treatment, where I was introduced to recovery and the 12 steps. Then, I embarked on a remarkable journey that unfolded beyond anything I had ever dreamed of before. I was working as a nurse when I achieved recovery, and after some time in recovery, I realized I didn't want to be a nurse when I grew up. I wanted to write, so I went back to school and got a degree in creative writing.

Working the 12 steps helped me repair my damaged relationship with my parents, who are now deceased, but each lived long enough to see me in recovery. I still attend 12-step meetings on a regular basis, sponsor women, and volunteer at a nonprofit recovery advocacy organization. The life I live today is only because of my commitment to recovery and my belief in the power of the 12 steps.

Customized Treatment and Recovery

Treatment programs are designed to help people and their families cope with the physical and psychological pressures of their dependency. No single treatment is appropriate for everyone.²⁷ Options are important, and some may need to incorporate mental health services for successful treatment. Several groups consistently face stressful situations, and each has unique needs that are important to consider in treatment and recovery:

- **Public safety officials**, including police and fire personnel, as well as people in all branches of the military, have stressful careers in which they frequently put their lives at risk for the safety of others, which can contribute to substance use. One of SAMHSA's [10 Strategic Initiatives](#) is to support military service men and women, their families, and communities, by leading efforts to ensure needed behavioral health services are accessible and outcomes are successful. Many public safety units offer anonymous counseling and resources for individuals; however, the fear of being discovered may preclude people from turning to their unit's resources.²⁸ If people feel they cannot use workplace programs, other options are available such as anonymous in-person support groups. These groups include [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) and [Narcotics Anonymous](#), and online resources specific to public safety officials, such as [Battle Mind](#) and [Police Stressline](#).

now more than ever!

targeted outreach

- **People in the workforce** also can feel tremendously stressed, especially during turbulent economic times, which puts them at risk for substance abuse. Outpatient treatment, mutual support meetings, or online treatment options, such as recovery meetings and chat rooms, might be valuable to this group because they are likely concerned about the cost and taking time away from work for treatment.²⁹ The [Employee Assistance Directory](#) offers addiction and treatment resources by State, and one of SAMHSA's [10 Strategic Initiatives](#) is to promote employment opportunities for individuals affected by financial problems.
- **Older adults** face a number of challenges that can increase their stress levels and put them at risk for substance abuse. They can encounter a sudden change of pace upon retirement, loss of a spouse or child, financial worries, health concerns, or poor social support networks, and may feel lonely or depressed.³⁰ Older adults are particularly at risk for prescription drug abuse, even inadvertently. People aged 65 and older consume one-third of all medications and are more likely to be prescribed long-term and multiple prescriptions, which could lead to unintentional misuse or dependence.³¹ In-patient treatment plans, mutual support groups, or partial hospital or day treatment programs might be appropriate for this group so that they have additional human interaction they might be lacking.³² The Web site [Aging and Addiction](#) provides resources for older adults who need help for addiction.
- **Families** may encounter illness, marital strain, financial problems, family conflicts, emotional or physical abuse, and work problems that reverberate at home, which can all increase stress and substance use.^{33, 34} For families, an inclusive treatment program that includes family therapy might be necessary.³⁵ Additionally, [Nar-Anon](#) and [Al-Anon/Alateen](#) offer a variety of addiction and recovery resources for families of individuals suffering from alcohol or drug dependence, respectively.

Resources

A variety of recovery and treatment resources provide a sense of community for those in recovery. These resources allow individuals to share their experiences and questions with others who have gone through similar journeys. Visit the **Recovery Month** Web site at <http://www.recoverymonth.gov>, for a comprehensive list of resources. Following are a handful of additional key resources:

- **SAMHSA's National Helpline** – Provides 24-hour free and confidential information and treatment referrals in English and Spanish by calling **1-800-662-HELP**, or 1-800-487-4889 (TDD).
- **SAMHSA's "Find Substance Abuse and Mental Health Treatment" Web site** – Contains resources about mental health, substance abuse, and treatment.
- **Treatment 101: Recovery Today** – A SAMHSA [television](#) and [radio](#) program that examines the many aspects of treatment and recovery.

now more than ever!

targeted outreach

- **SoberRecovery** – Offers support forums for people in recovery as well as friends and family members affected by someone's substance use.
- **Alcohol and Drug Rehab Treatment Resource Center** – Provides information on key issues about alcohol and drug abuse, including interventions, rehab, and treatment. Visitors must enter identifying information to participate in this Web site.

There are also several issue-specific resources, including:

- **Mental Health Self-Assessment** – This Web site and toll-free number, 1-877-877-3647, is a resource dedicated to families and service members who need a private and confidential assessment for conditions such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, and alcohol abuse.
- **SAMHSA's Division of Workplace Programs** – This program provides guidance for employers on workplace drug-testing issues by calling 1-800-Workplace, or 1-800-967-5752.
- **The National Institute on Aging** – A division of the National Institutes of Health, this agency provides research, training, health information, and programs relevant to aging and older adults. The toll-free service, 1-800-222-4225, and Web site provides information such as an “Older Adults and Alcohol” brochure, coauthored by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), with information on substance use.

For more information and organizations that can help provide treatment and other resources nationally or in your area, call 1-800-662-HELP or 1-800-487-4889 (TDD), or visit <http://www.samhsa.gov/treatment>. For additional *Recovery Month* materials, visit <http://www.recoverymonth.gov>.

Inclusion of Web sites and other resources mentioned in this document and on the *Recovery Month* Web site does not constitute official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

now more than ever!

SOURCES

- 1 *Stressful Events Can Influence Drugs, Alcohol Use*. The Partnership for a Drug-Free America Web site: http://www.drugfree.org/Portal/DrugIssue/Features/Stressful_Events_Can_Influence_Drug_Alcohol. Accessed July 20, 2009.
- 2 *Results from the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings*. HHS Publication No. SMA 09-4434. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies, September 2009, p. 83.
- 3 *Women's Mental Health Hit Hard by Recession, Yet Many Show Resilience and Resourcefulness in Coping with Stress*. The American Psychiatric Association Web site: <http://www.psych.org/MainMenu/Newsroom/NewsReleases/2009NewsReleases/WomensMentalHealthHitHardbyRecession.aspx>. Accessed August 11, 2009.
- 4 *Results from the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings*, September 2009, p. 83.
- 5 *NIDA InfoFacts—Treatment Approaches for Drug Addiction*. National Institute on Drug Abuse Web site: <http://www.drugabuse.gov/infofacts/treatmeth.html>. Accessed August 15, 2008.
- 6 *Your Internet Guide to Drug & Alcohol Addiction Recovery*. Addiction Recovery Guide Web site: <http://www.addictionrecoveryguide.org/treatment/index.html>. Accessed September 21, 2009.
- 7 *Principles of Drug Addiction Treatment, A Research-Based Guide*. National Institute on Drug Abuse, April 2009, p. 4.
- 8 *Treatment Methods for Drug Addiction*. Connecticut Clearinghouse Web site: <http://www.ctclearinghouse.org/topics/customer-files/Treatment-Methods-for-Drug-Addiction.pdf>. Accessed August 16, 2008.
- 9 The Recovery Connection Web site: <http://www.recoveryconnection.org>. Accessed September 21, 2009.
- 10 *Results from the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings*, September 2009, p. 80.
- 11 The Recovery Connection Web site: <http://www.recoveryconnection.org>. Accessed September 21, 2009.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 *NIDA InfoFacts—Treatment Approaches for Drug Addiction*. National Institute on Drug Abuse Web site: <http://www.drugabuse.gov/infofacts/treatmeth.html>. Accessed August 15, 2008.
- 14 *Treatment Methods for Drug Addiction*. Connecticut Clearinghouse Web site: <http://www.ctclearinghouse.org/topics/customer-files/Treatment-Methods-for-Drug-Addiction.pdf>. Accessed September 30, 2009.
- 15 *Results from the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings*, September 2009, p. 80.
- 16 The Recovery Connection Web site: <http://www.recoveryconnection.org>. Accessed September 21, 2009.
- 17 *Results from the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings*, September 2009, p. 80.
- 18 *NIDA InfoFacts—Treatment Approaches for Drug Addiction*. National Institute on Drug Abuse Web site: <http://www.drugabuse.gov/infofacts/treatmeth.html>. Accessed August 16, 2008.
- 19 *The NSDUH Report. Participation in Self-Help Groups for Alcohol and Illicit Drug Use: 2006 and 2007*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies, November 13, 2008.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 *"Considerations for the Provision of E-Therapy" Report*: HHS Publication No. SMA 09-4450. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 2009, p. 3.
- 22 The Recovery Connection Web site: <http://www.recoveryconnection.org>. Accessed September 21, 2009.
- 23 *Results from the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings*, September 2009, p. 80.
- 24 *NIDA InfoFacts—Treatment Approaches for Drug Addiction*. National Institute on Drug Abuse Web site: <http://www.drugabuse.gov/infofacts/treatmeth.html>. Accessed August 16, 2008.
- 25 *National Summit on Recovery Conference Report*. DHHS Publication No. (SMA) 07-4276. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, September 2007, pp. 5-7.
- 26 "Americans Believe in Prevention and Recovery From Addictions." *CARAVAN Survey for SAMHSA on Addictions and Recovery Fact Sheet*, pp. 1-2.
- 27 *Principles of Drug Addiction Treatment, A Research-Based Guide*. National Institute on Drug Health, April 2009, p. 4.
- 28 *Substance Abuse Among Healthcare Professionals*. Addiction Search Web site: http://www.addictionsearch.com/treatment_articles/article/substance-abuse-among-healthcare-professionals_49.html. Accessed September 21, 2009.
- 29 Addiction Recovery Web site: <http://www.addictionrecovery.net/day-treatment-programs-for-alcohol-addiction-or-drug-addiction-in-delaware-for-working-people>. Accessed September 21, 2009.
- 30 Ziedler, Penelope. "Addiction in Older Women: American Health Care's Best-Kept Secret." The California Dental Association Web site: http://www.cda.org/library/cda_member/pubs/journal/jour0208/ziegler.pdf. Accessed August 5, 2009.
- 31 "Prescription Drugs: Abuse and Addiction." *National Institute on Drug Abuse Research and Report Series*. Publication Number: 01-4881. Bethesda, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, July 2005, pp. 5-6.
- 32 *Older Adult Intervention*. Aging and Addiction Web site: <http://www.agingandaddiction.net/intervention.html>. Accessed September 21, 2009.
- 33 *Children of Addicted Parents: Important Facts*. The National Association for Children of Alcoholics Web site: <http://www.nacoa.net/pdfs/addicted.pdf>. Accessed August 11, 2009.
- 34 *Stressful Events Can Influence Drugs, Alcohol Use*. The Partnership for a Drug-Free America Web site: http://www.drugfree.org/Portal/DrugIssue/Features/Stressful_Events_Can_Influence_Drug_Alcohol. Accessed July 20, 2009.
- 35 Al-Anon Web site: <http://www.al-anon.org/english.html>. Accessed September 21, 2009.

now more than ever!